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Drug agents alerted to hit squad

Colombians may be planning assassinations and bombings

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Federal drug agents are on a nationwide alert for three Colombian men, all reputed narcotics runners, who may be planning assassinations or bombings of government buildings in the United States.

A Drug Enforcement Administration spokesman Wednesday said "intelligence now indicates that there is a potential of direct violence" against a DEA facility by "Colombian traffickers."

A San Francisco newspaper also reported Wednesday that, according to internal memos from the federal prosecutor in Northern California, Colombian cocaine smugglers have offered \$300,000 to the "hit squad" for the kidnapping of a DEA agent.

A general warning from the DEA in Washington about the three-man terrorist squad was first distributed by memo to its agents, U.S. attorneys and FBI offices around the country about two weeks ago.

The information, developed from confidential

informants and including the names of the purported terrorists, prompted heightened security at the downtown Miami offices of U.S. Attorney Stanley Marcus and at other local law enforcement agencies.

Threats and violence against U.S. citizens and installations in South America increased dramatically late last year, when Colombian President Belisario Betancur agreed to longstanding American requests to extradite accused drug smugglers to the U.S.

The first group of Colombian defendants was flown to Miami Jan. 5. One man was transferred to Washington, D.C., to await trial and three remain in Miami on drug-related charges. They are being held in solitary confinement at the Metropolitan Correctional Center.

Retaliation from drug organizations for the extraditions began before the four Colombians arrived in the U.S. Two months ago, a car bomb exploded outside the U.S. Embassy in Bogota, killing a bystander, and 17 workers were murdered at an American financed program to kill coca trees.

Law enforcement sources said it isn't known whether the hitmen are in the United States or what city might be their target.